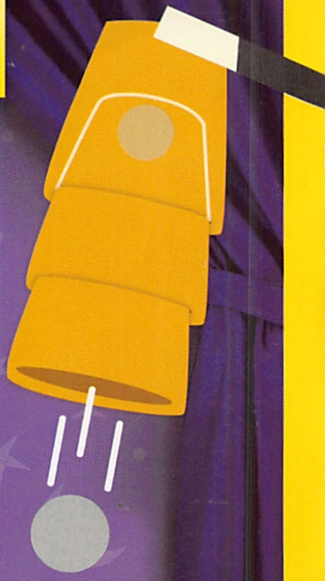
NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC™

MAGIC SET

INSTRUCTIONS & LEARNING GUIDE



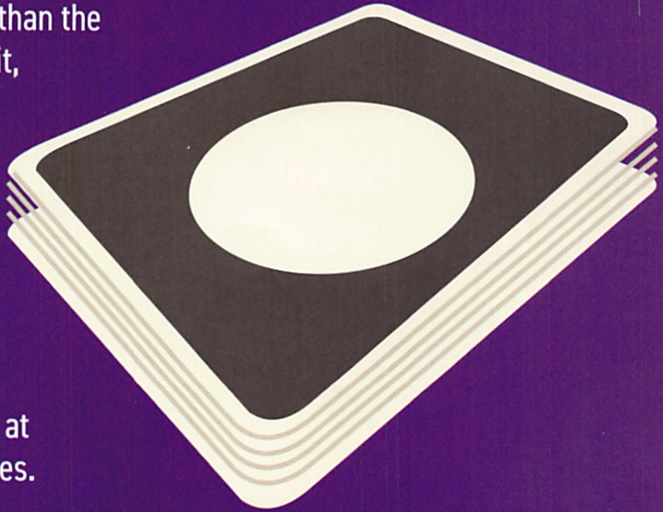
Welcome to the incredible world of magic!

These instructions will lead you through many of the tricks included in your kit, however, be sure to watch our tutorial videos hosted by professional magician Lou Serrano at **thinkbluemarble.com/magic45/** for complete explanations of all the tricks in this set. You may also follow the QR code.

The following steps offer suggestions on how to perform each trick, but they are mainly focused on giving you a behind-the-scenes understanding of the techniques and pieces at work in each trick. Part of the fun of being a magician is coming up with your own stories and performance methods, so don't be afraid to experiment once you've mastered the basics!

Magician's Deck Overview

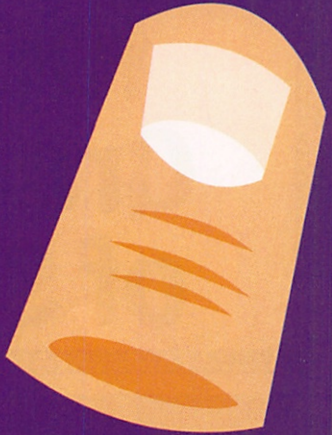
You can do countless tricks with the Magician's Deck because the cards in this deck are cut especially for magic. One side is narrower than the other side, which means that if you take one card and reverse it, it will protrude slightly. You'll be able to feel that protrusion with your fingers, but the audience won't be able to see it.



This also means that you'll need to be careful how you shuffle the deck, so the orientation of the cards remains how you want it to be. The overhand shuffle is one effective method. Hold the cards in one hand and transfer a few cards at a time to the opposite hand, stacking the new cards on top of the previous cards. Be sure to watch our instructional video at **thinkbluemarble.com/magic45/** for more shuffling techniques.

A Note on the Thumb Tip

In many cases the thumb tip will not match the skin tone of the user. This is common, in fact one of the most popular thumb tips in the world of magic is only available in one color. The keys to making tricks with the thumb tip work are hiding the thumb tip whenever possible and keeping the audience's attention away from the thumb tip. If you act naturally and don't call attention to that part of your hand, you will stand the best chance of successfully performing your illusion. Even the smallest glance can signal the audience to look in some cases, so it's best to always act as if nothing is there when wearing the thumb tip. Plus, our brains regularly miss finer details in situations. To make up for that, we fill in the gaps based on our memories and what is most likely to be true based on those memories. Since hands don't typically have thumb tips like the one in this kit, the audience isn't likely to be looking for one. Practice your tricks to ensure your movements are fast and precise so the audience remains unaware.



1000 Grains of Salt

From the Kit:

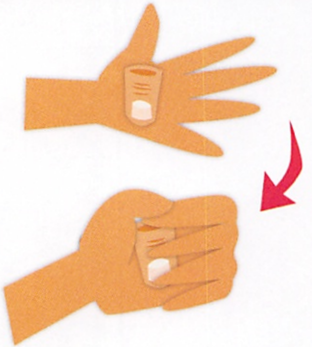
- Thumb Tip

What to Get:

- Salt

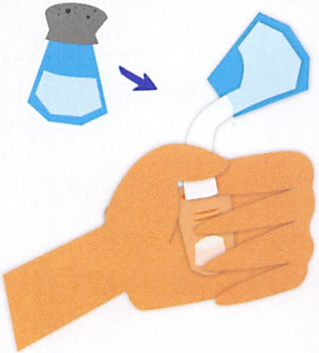
What to Do:

1



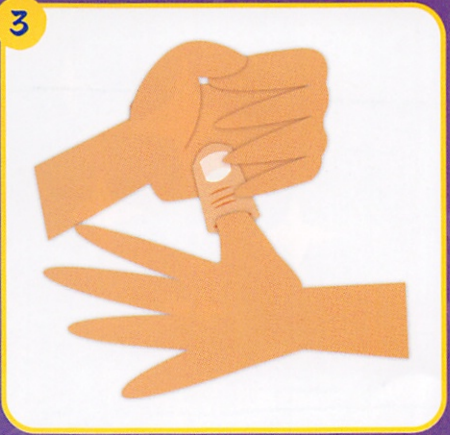
Place the thumb tip in your left palm and make a loose fist with your left hand, concealing the thumb tip from the audience.

2



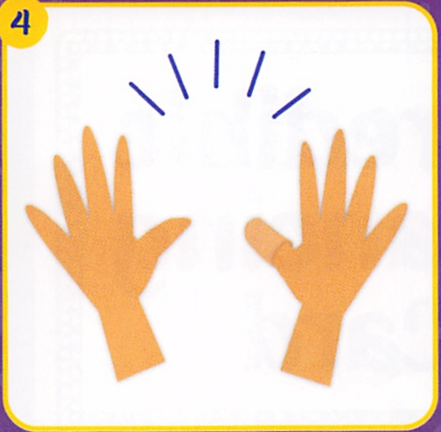
Pour the salt into the opening of your left-hand fist between your index finger and left thumb. To the audience it will look like you're pouring salt directly into your hand, but you'll actually be pouring it into the thumb tip.

3



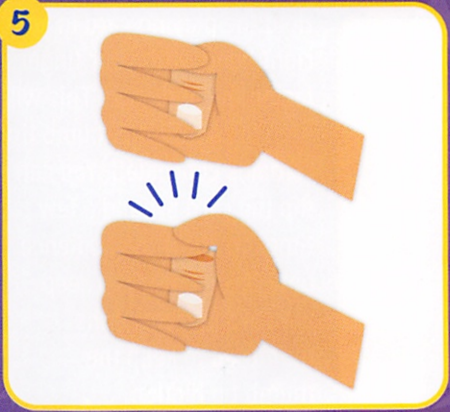
Dust off any remaining grains of salt from your left hand and discreetly insert your right thumb into the thumb tip.

4



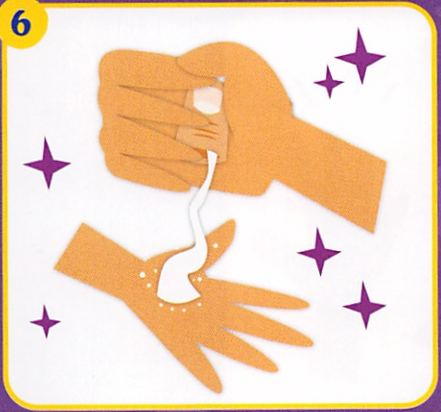
Slowly open your left hand and show both open hands to the audience, ensuring your thumb tips are pointing directly towards the audience. The salt has disappeared!

5



To bring the salt back, reach into the air with your right hand and curl your right thumb into your palm. Make a fist and grab hold of the thumb tip, removing your right-hand thumb. Now the thumb tip will be securely concealed in your right-hand fist.

6



Keeping your right-hand in a fist, slowly pour the salt into your left palm. It will appear as if the salt is magically falling from inside your right hand!

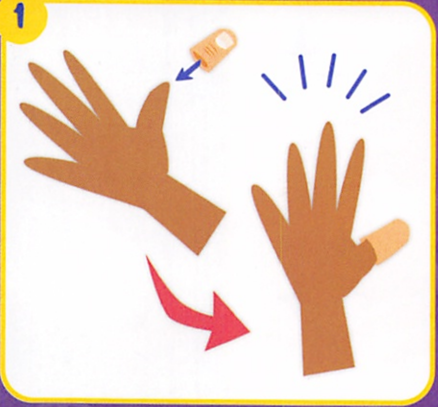
Incredible Balancing Card

From the Kit:

- Thumb Tip
- 1 Playing Card

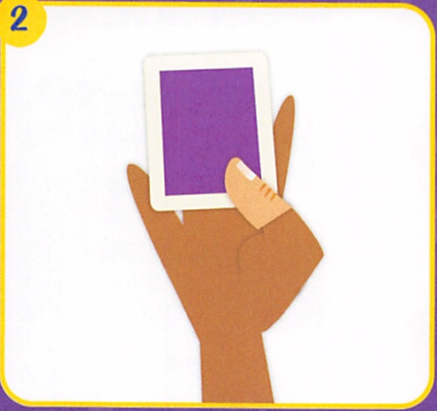
What to Do:

1

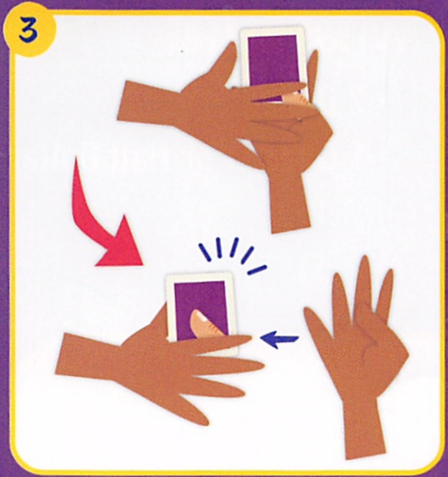


Place the thumb tip on your right-hand thumb.

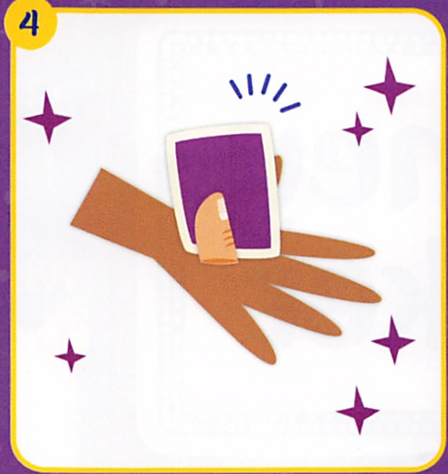
2



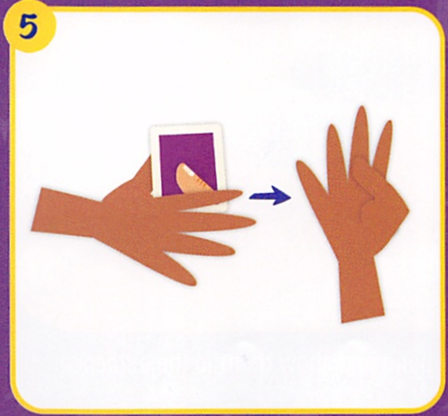
Hold the playing card in your right hand, with your fingers facing the audience. This will help to ensure the thumb tip remains concealed. You can flip the card around a few times to show the audience both faces but try to keep the card in front of the thumb tip to keep the thumb tip hidden.



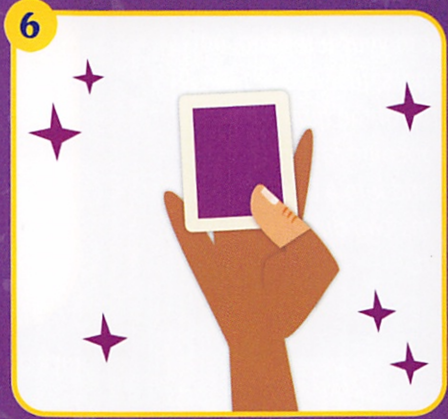
With your fingers facing the audience, grab both the card and thumb tip with your left hand. You should be able to show the audience one full side of the playing card while keeping the thumb tip behind, hidden from view.



Grab the playing card and thumb tip with your right hand, then balance the thumb tip and card on the back of your left hand. The thumb tip will act as a brace to keep the playing card upright. From the audience point of view, it appears as if the card is balancing by itself!



Pick the card and thumb tip up with your right hand and transfer them to your left hand. Rotate both so the thumb tip behind the card is facing your right hand.



Insert your right-hand thumb back into the thumb tip and hold the card in your right hand as you were in Step 2. You can flip the card around a few times again to show the audience both faces but try to keep the card in front of the thumb tip, so the audience thinks the card balanced all on its own!

Money Maker

From the Kit:

- Thumb Tip

What to Get:

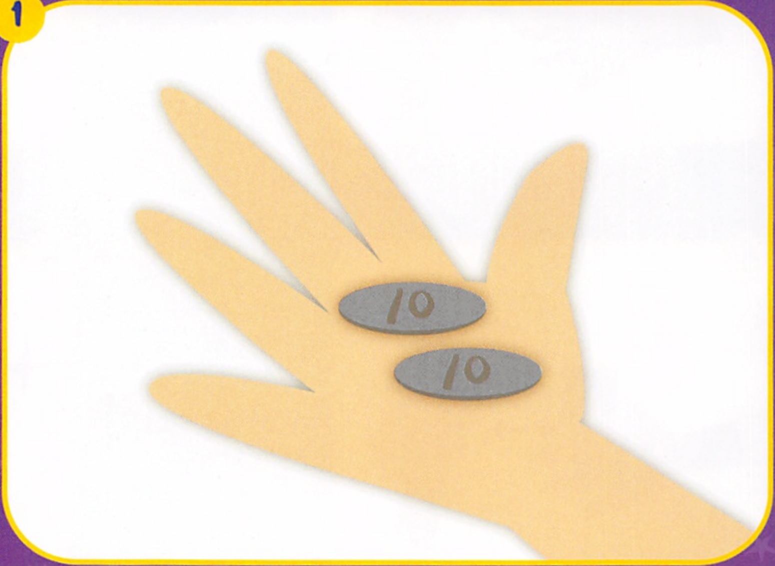
- 2 Dimes
- 1 Quarter or Half Dollar

Before Your Performance

Place the quarter or half dollar in your left hand, on top of your middle and ring fingers, just above the palm. Place the thumb tip on top of the quarter or half dollar with the thumb tip opening facing your index finger, then close your hand into a loose fist and rest it on the table. Place the two dimes on the table in front of your right hand.

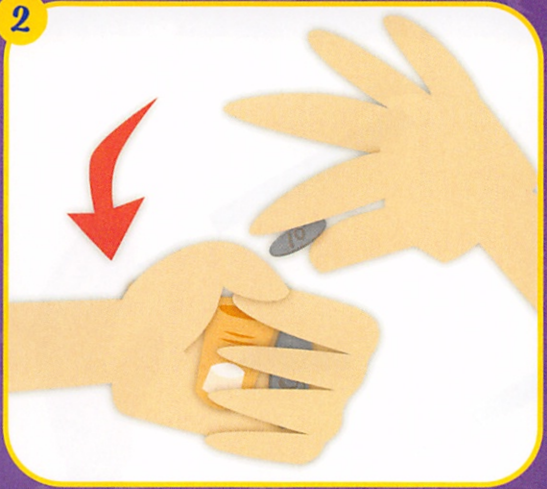
What to Do:

1



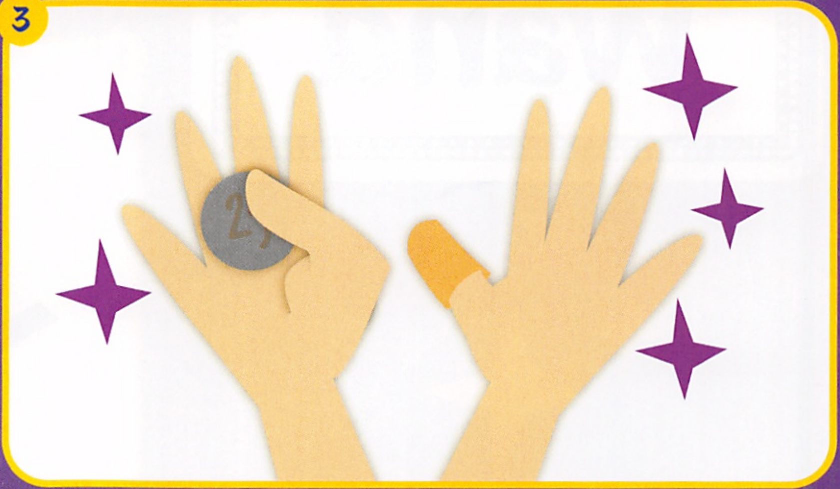
Pick up the dimes with your right hand and show them to the audience.

2



Take the dimes and place them into your left fist. The audience will believe you're dropping the dimes into your hand, but you'll actually be dropping the dimes into the hidden thumb tip.

3



Once the dimes are securely inside the thumb tip, insert your right-hand thumb into the thumb tip and open both hands to reveal the quarter or half dollar. ***Note:*** *Ensure the thumb tip points directly toward the audience or that it's kept concealed behind the coin you've revealed.*

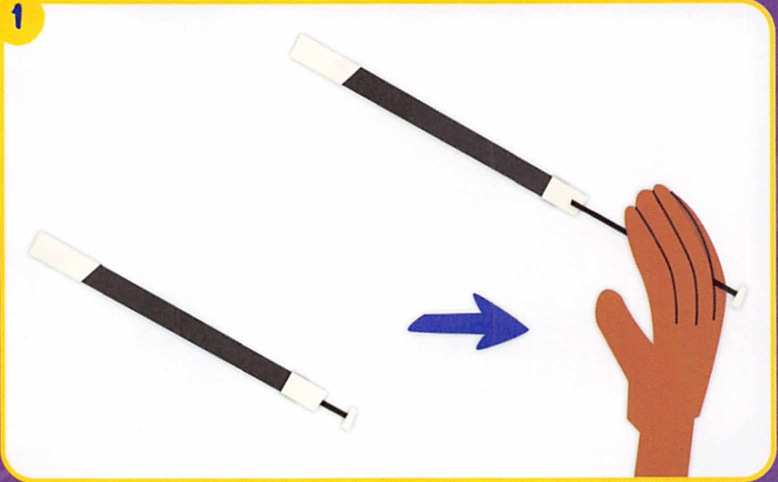
Rising Wand

From the Kit:

- Magic Wand

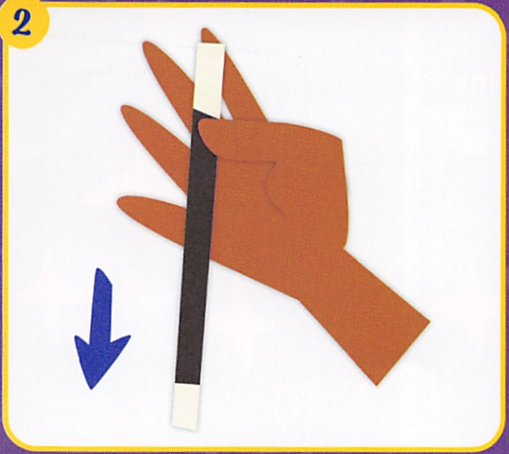
What to Do:

1



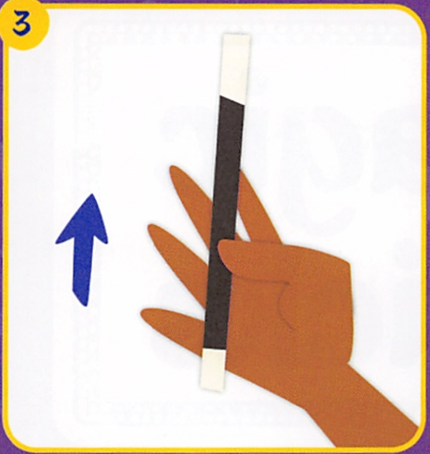
Your magic wand has special caps on each end connected to an elastic cord inside. You'll want to pull one of these ends out and hold the end cap between your right-hand ring and pinky fingers, just above the middle knuckle.

2



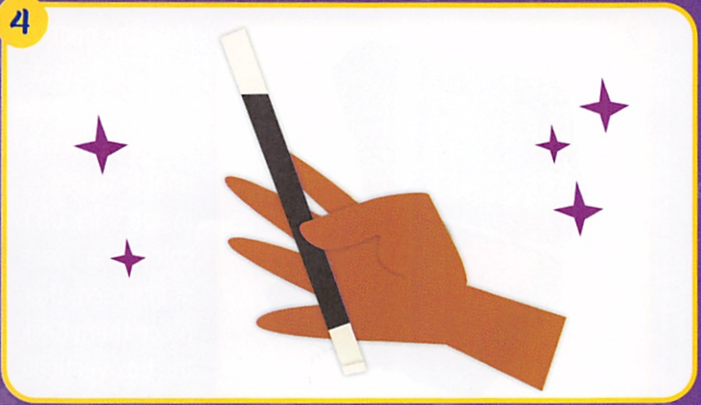
Stretch the cord so you can hold the opposite end of the magic wand in your right hand. Ensure the cord is hidden from the audience by positioning your right palm outward.

3



Hold the wand against your index and middle fingers with your thumb, then gently release the pressure. As you do, the tension from the elastic cord will move the wand upward. The audience will think it's moving up by magic!

4



When the wand has gone up as far as it can go, gently release the end cap from your pinky and ring fingers. Try your best to release the cap without making a sound or showing the audience!

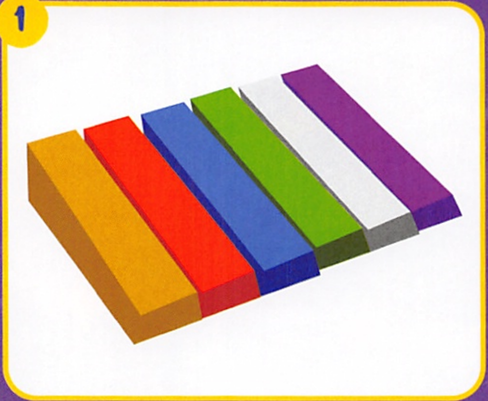
Magic Bricks

From the Kit:

- Magic Bricks Box

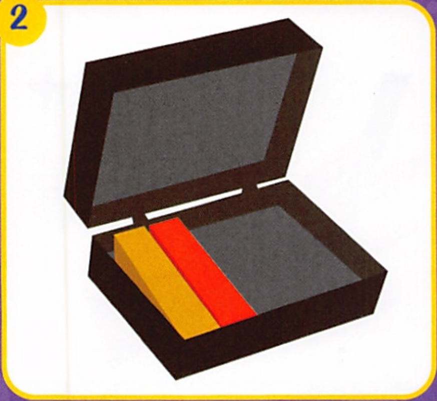
What to Do:

1



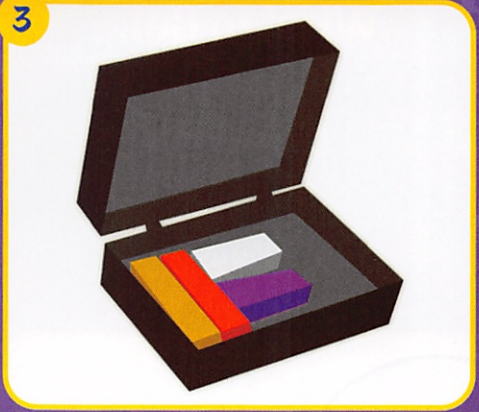
Lay all six bricks in a neat stack in front of the box and have an audience member choose two colors.

2



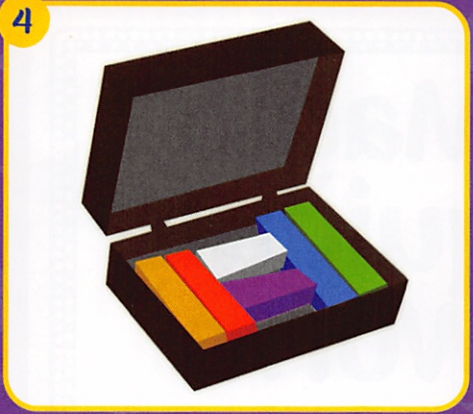
Hold the open box with the outside of the lid facing the audience so they're unable to see inside. Pick up two colors that were not chosen, then place them back in the box vertically at one end.

3



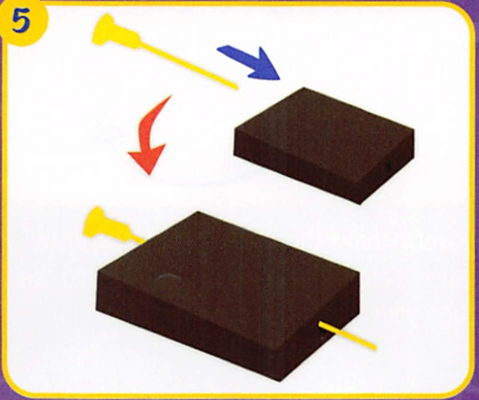
Pick up the two colors that were chosen, holding them in the same way as the bricks in Step 2, and as you place them in the box turn them so that they sit next to one another horizontally in the center of the box.

4



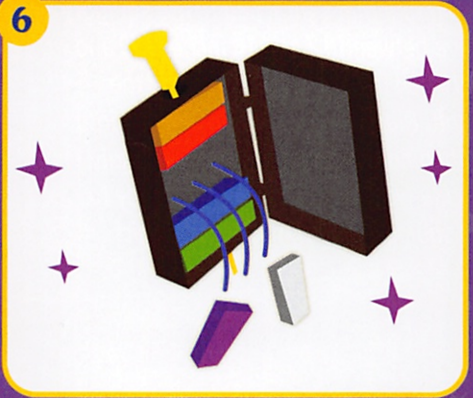
Pick up the final two colors that were not chosen, then place them back in the box vertically on the opposite end.

5



Close the box lid, then slide the rod all the way through the box. This will hold the blocks that were not chosen firmly in place but allow the blocks that were chosen to fall.

6



Open the lid and tip the box toward yourself so the two blocks that the audience member selected magically fall to the table!

Magic Squiggly Worm

From the Kit:

- 1 Magic Worm
- Magic Wand

What to Get:

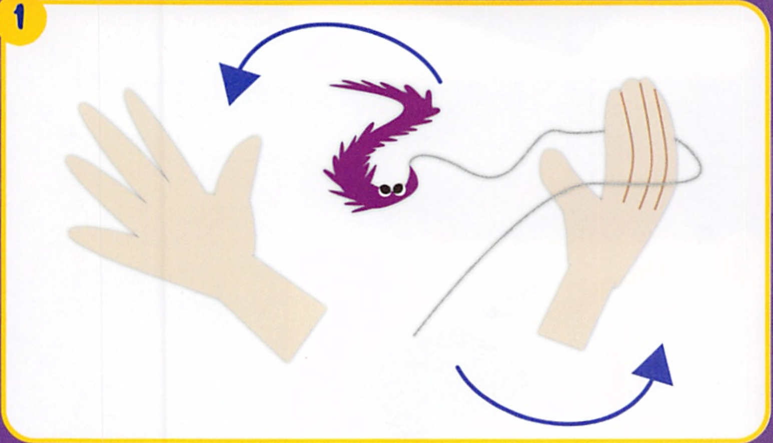
- 2 Transparent Cups/Glasses

Before Your Performance

Unwind the fishing line that's attached to the squiggly worm so you have between 12 and 14 inches (30 and 35cm) of line between the squiggly worm and the cardboard line roll. Place the cardboard line roll into your waistband behind your belt buckle (or roughly where a belt buckle would be). Now you're ready to make the magic squiggly worm move like magic!

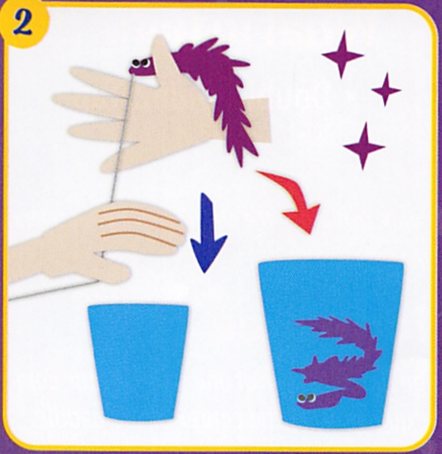
What to Do:

1



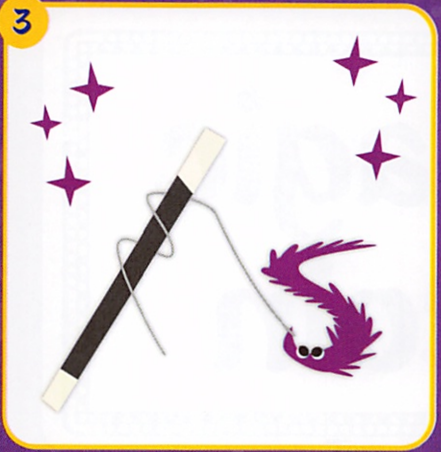
To make the magic squiggly worm move through your fingers, draw your hands up and away from you along the bottom of the fishing line. Run the line and worm through your fingers, alternating hands for even more dramatic effect.

2



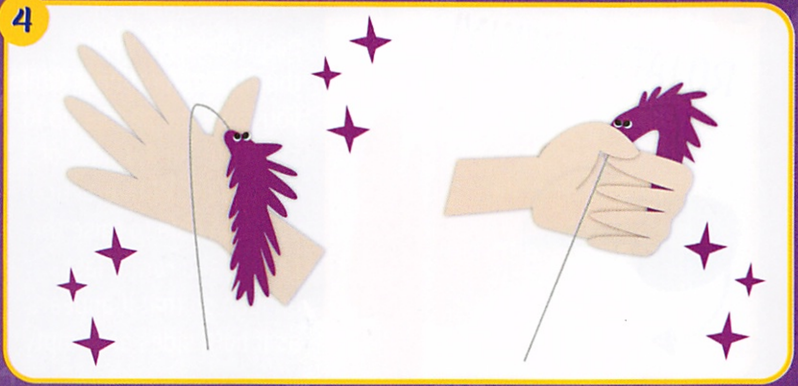
To make the magic squiggly worm fall into the glass, wrap the fishing line around your thumb and hold it just above the glass. With your other hand, pull the fishing line down toward the table. This will roll the squiggly worm over your thumb and drop it down into the glass.

3



To make the squiggly worm move around the magic wand, wrap the fishing line around the wand two times. As you raise the wand, the worm will float up and circle the wand twice before falling back down into the cup.

4



To make the squiggly worm go back into your fist, hold the fishing line and worm in one hand, with the head of the worm hanging outside your fist. As you raise your hand, the fishing line will be pulled and the head of the worm will start to pull back toward and into your fist.

Magic Coin

From the Kit:

- Coin Paddle
- Plastic Coin

What to Get:

- Double-Sided Tape

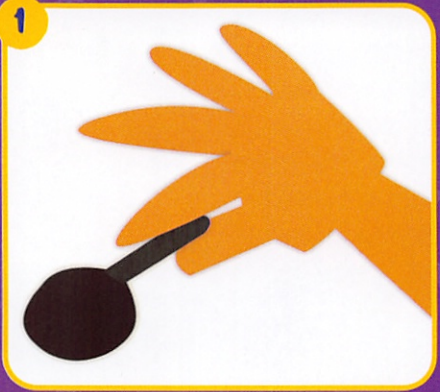
Note: *You can use a real quarter or dime in place of the plastic coin if you prefer.*

Before Your Performance

Put your piece of double-sided tape in the center of one side of your coin paddle. Press your plastic coin or quarter into the center of the paddle with the double-sided tape. Make sure the coin is securely taped to the coin paddle so that it doesn't fall out when you turn the paddle over.

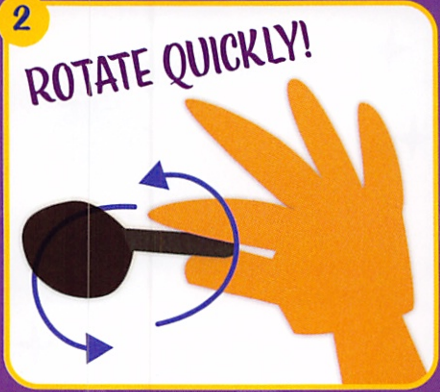
What to Do:

1



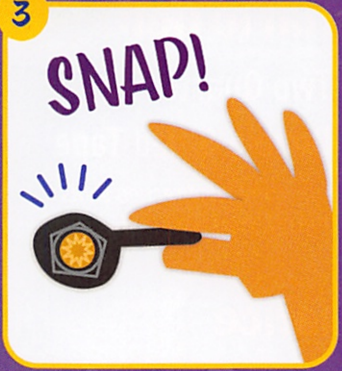
Hold the paddle between your thumb and forefinger in your right hand, coin side down.

2


ROTATE QUICKLY!

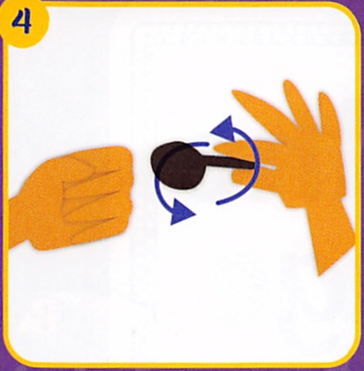
Practice rotating the paddle between your thumb and forefinger while you raise the paddle up to show the "underside" of the paddle. With practice, you'll be able to raise the paddle and rotate fast enough so that it appears as if both sides are empty.

3



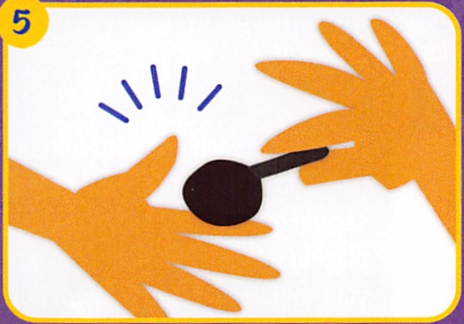
To make the coin magically appear, snap the fingers of your left hand over the top of the paddle while quickly rotating the paddle between your thumb and forefinger so the coin is facing up. You'll need to be very quick with the rotation to fool your audience!

4



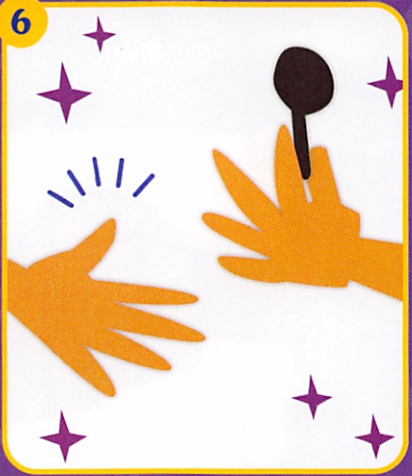
You can mimic tossing the coin into your hand by flipping the paddle upward toward your left palm, then closing your palm to make it look like you're holding the coin. Use the paddle rotation skill you learned in previous steps to quickly flip the paddle so it looks like the coin really has been transferred to your left hand.

5



You can then wave the seemingly empty paddle over your left hand, then slowly open your hand to make it appear as if the coin has disappeared from your left hand.

6



To close out the trick, snap your fingers over the empty paddle like you did in Step 3 and quickly rotate so the coin is facing upward. With your left hand, make it appear as if you're grabbing the coin from the paddle, rotating the paddle so the empty side is up as you grab hold of the coin. You can then wave the paddle over your left hand as you did in Step 5, opening your hand to show that it too is empty. Show the audience that both sides of the coin paddle are empty too, as you did in Step 2, and the audience will believe that the coin is completely gone!

Keep the Change

From the Kit:

- Coin Paddle

What to Get:

- Two Quarters
- Double-Sided Tape

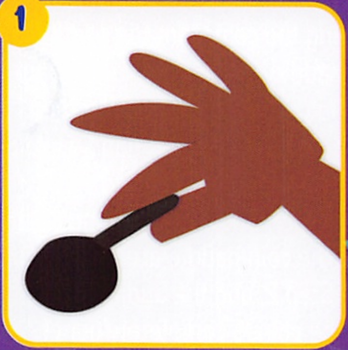
***Note:** Be sure to practice the coin paddle rotation and misdirection skills you learned in the Magic Coin trick. You'll be using them a lot in this one!*

Before Your Performance

Put your piece of double-sided tape in the center of one side of your coin paddle. Press one quarter into the center of the paddle with the double-sided tape. Make sure the coin is securely taped to the paddle so that it doesn't fall out when you turn the paddle over. Place the other quarter into your left-side pants pocket.

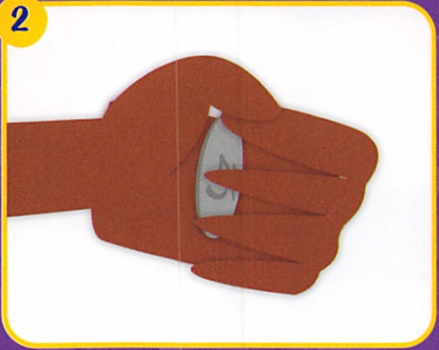
What to Do:

1



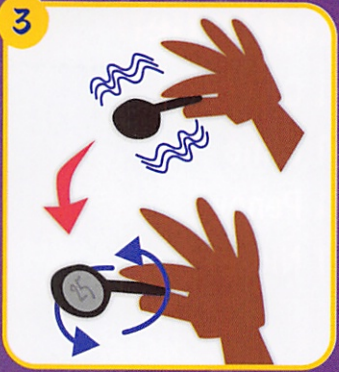
Hold the paddle between your thumb and forefinger in your right hand, coin side down.

2



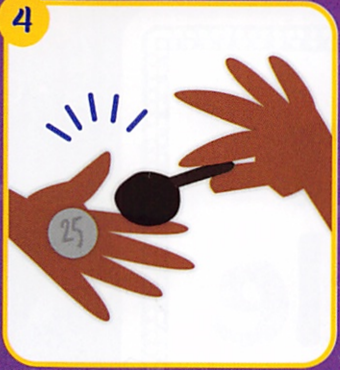
Discreetly reach into your left-side pants pocket and take hold of the second quarter in your left hand, placing it just above the palm on your middle and ring fingers. Pull your hand out in a loose fist and rest it on the table so the audience can't see that you're holding the coin in your hand.

3



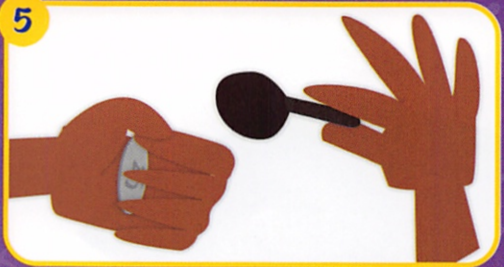
Shake your right hand while holding the coin paddle, empty side up, and quickly rotate the paddle with your thumb and forefinger. The rotation needs to be fast and happen as you shake your hand so it looks as if a coin has magically appeared in the paddle.

4



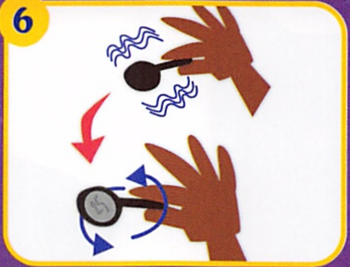
Now, you can flip the paddle toward your left hand to make it look like you're tossing the coin from the paddle into your left hand. As you "toss" the coin from the paddle into your left hand, you'll open your left hand and reveal the coin you've been hiding. If you move fast enough, it will appear as if the coin from the paddle has transferred into your left hand.

5



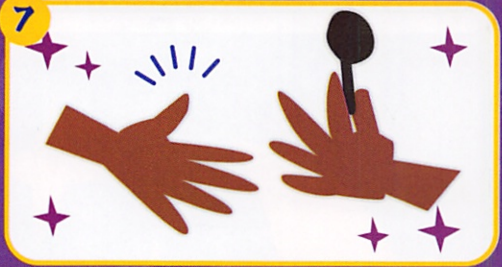
Ensure that the paddle in your right hand has the empty side toward the audience. At the same time, take your left hand and put it in your pocket to make it look like you're placing the coin in your pocket. You'll want to keep hold of the coin, however, in the same location in your left hand as you had it in Step 2.

6



Now you're ready to repeat the process. Follow Step 3 once again and proceed through Step 5. You can do this over and over again to make it appear as if you're conjuring an endless stream of quarters!

7



When you're ready to end the trick, drop the coin in your left hand into your pocket for real as you complete Step 5. Then, rotating the paddle between your thumb and forefinger in your right hand, show the audience that both sides are empty and it will appear as if both the quarters are gone!

Coin Puzzle

From the Kit:

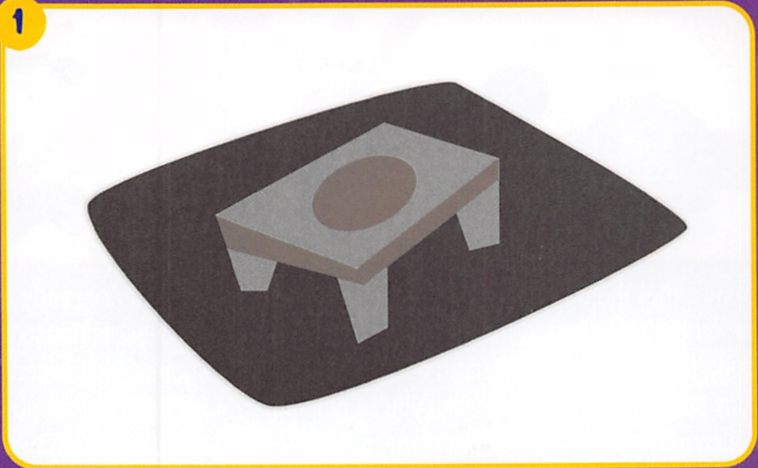
- Coin Puzzle Card

What to Get:

- 1 Quarter
- 1 Dime
- 1 Penny
- 1 Nickel

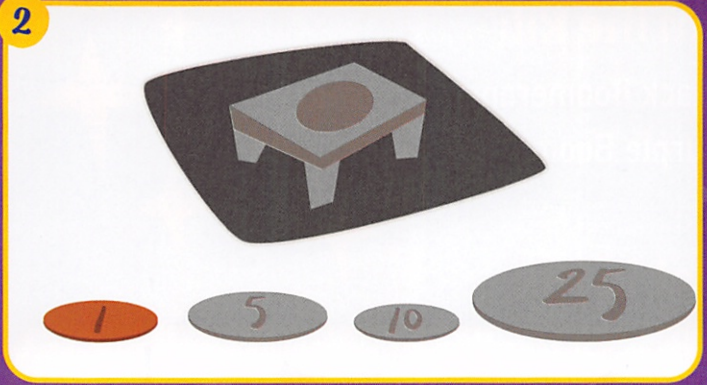
What to Do:

1



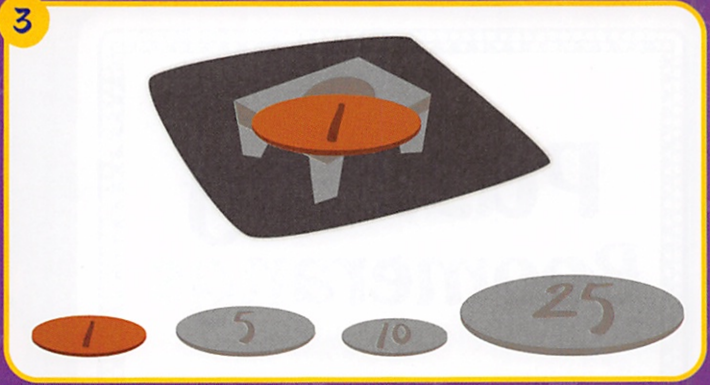
Place your coin puzzle card with the tabletop image facing up.

2



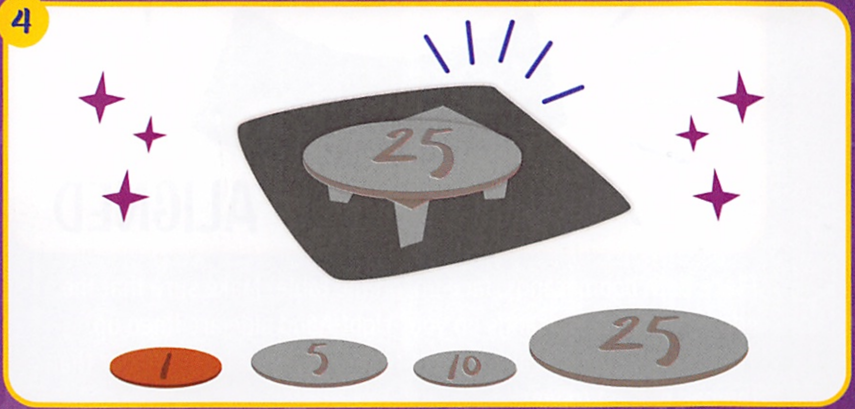
Place your four coins, evenly spaced, on the tabletop in front of the coin puzzle card

3



Ask the audience which coin they think will fit into the space on the tabletop image of the coin puzzle card. Place the coin they've chosen in the round space on the card, and they'll find that it doesn't quite fit!

4



Repeat with the remaining three coins. Each time, the audience will see that no matter how much it appears as if the coin should fit, it doesn't!

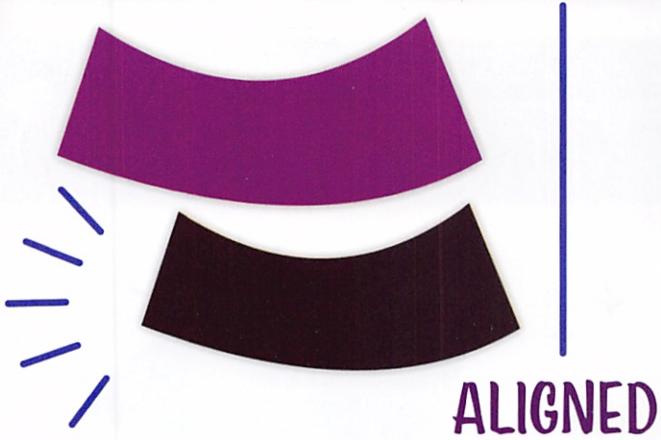
Puzzling Boomerangs

From the Kit:

- Black Boomerang
- Purple Boomerang

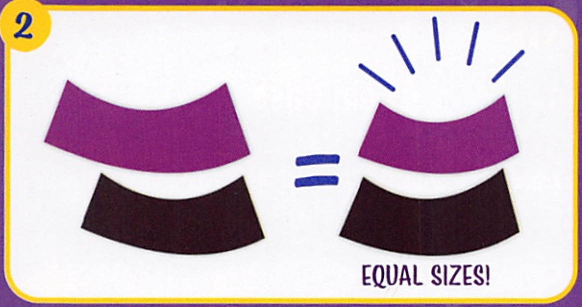
What to Do:

1



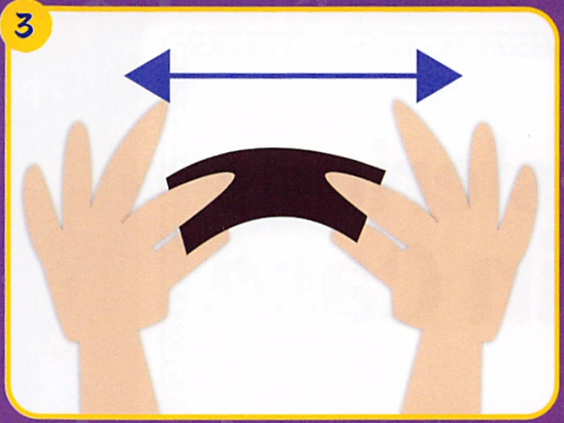
Place both boomerangs, face up, on the table. Make sure that the edges of the boomerangs on your right-hand side are lined up. That way the boomerang closest to the audience looks longer than the one closest to you.

2


EQUAL SIZES!

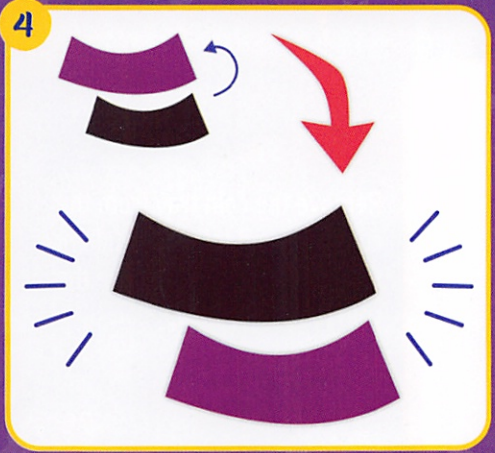
Explain to the audience that the boomerang closest to them looks a lot longer than the one closest to you and that you want to try to make them the same size.

3



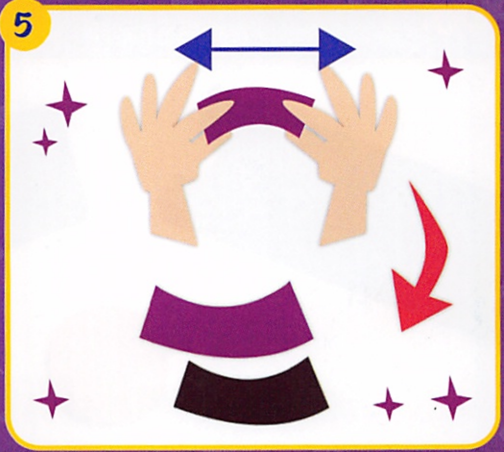
Pick up the boomerang closest to you, then pretend to give it a little stretch.

4



Place the boomerang on the side closest to the audience, ensuring the edges on your right-hand side are perfectly aligned. Now it looks like the boomerang you just stretched is longer than the one that was left on the table!

5



Repeat Steps 3 and 4 a few times to really stun your audience with this optical illusion!

Mysterious Coin Case

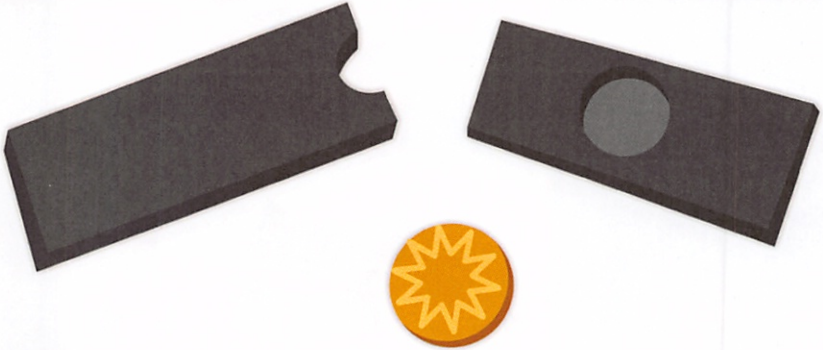
From the Kit:

- Plastic Coin
- Coin Case

Note: *You can use a real quarter or dime in place of the plastic coin if you prefer.*

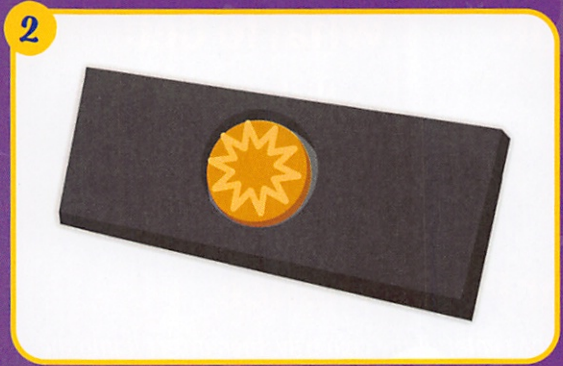
What to Do:

1



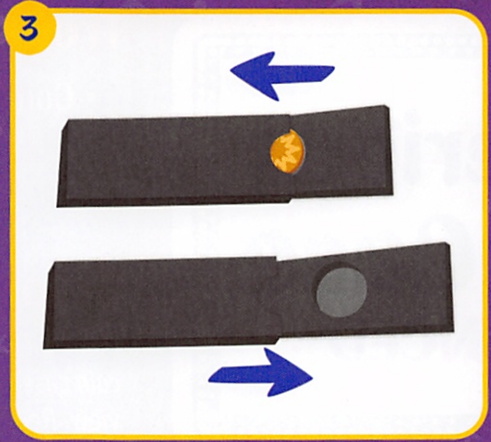
Remove the coin tray from the coin case and tell your audience that you are going to make the coin magically disappear.

2



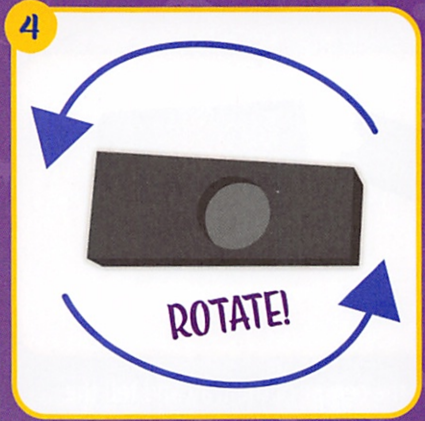
Place the coin into the round space in the middle of the coin case tray.

3



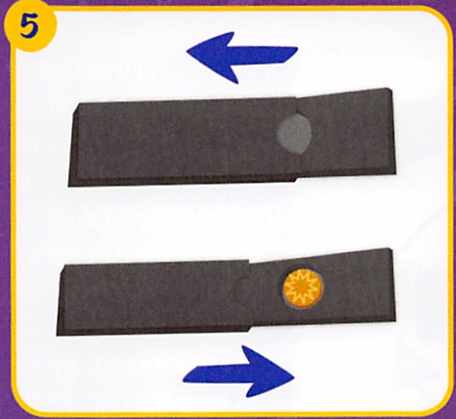
Insert the tray back into the coin case. As you insert it, a rod inside the coin case will push the coin so that it seems to disappear. (You'll know that the coin has simply been pushed into a secret compartment inside the coin case tray.) Show your audience that you've made the coin vanish.

4



To make the coin reappear, remove the coin case tray and rotate it so you can insert it back into the coin case with the opposite side going in first. Be sure to keep the round space in the middle of the tray facing up.

5



Reinsert the coin case tray. When you do, the rod inside the coin case will push the coin back into its original position. When you remove the tray, you can show your audience that the coin has magically reappeared in the center space of the tray!

Mysterious Coin Case

ADVANCED

From the Kit:

- Coin Case

What to Get:

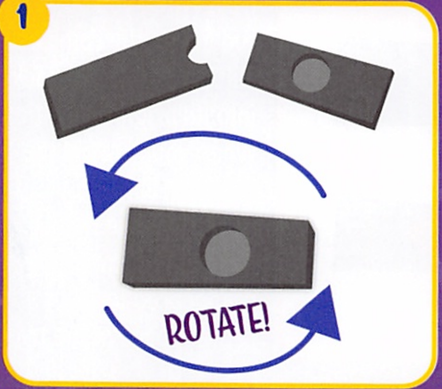
- Nickel
- Penny

Before Your Performance

Place the nickel into the center of the coin tray, then insert it into the coin case so that the rod inside the coin case hides the nickel from view. Reinsert the coin tray before you perform so that the nickel remains hidden when you pull the tray from the coin case.

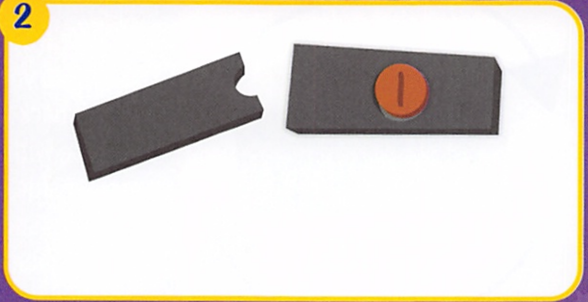
What to Do:

1



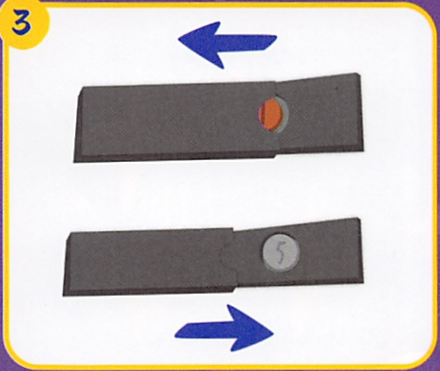
Pull the coin tray from the coin case and show the audience that the center of the tray is empty. As you pull the tray from the case quickly rotate it so that the center of the tray remains facing upward. That way when you reinsert the tray, you'll insert the opposite end, allowing the rod to reveal the nickel.

2



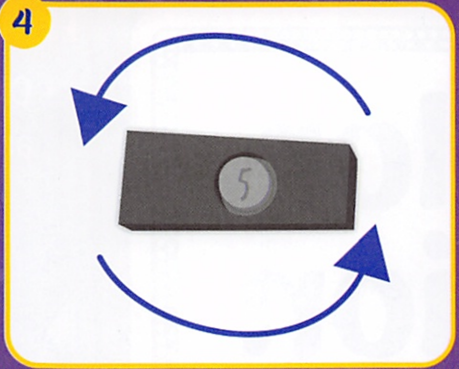
Place the penny in the center of the tray and tell the audience that you're going to turn the penny into a nickel.

3



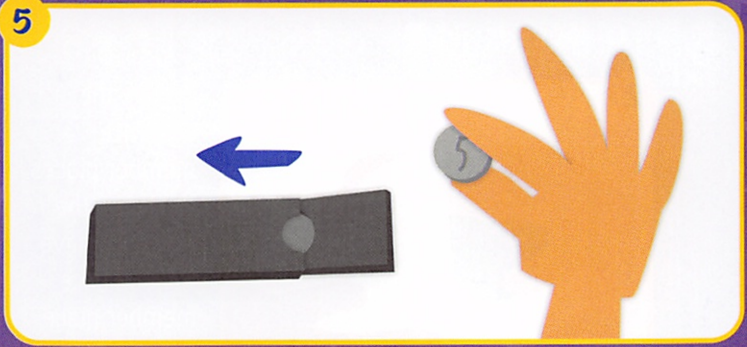
Insert the coin tray so that rod inside the coin case hides the penny and reveals the nickel.

4



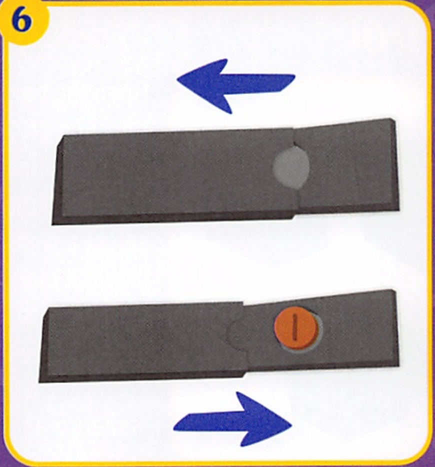
Pull the tray back out from the coin case, quickly rotating it so the center of the tray remains facing upward. If you rotate just after you remove the tray from the case it may appear a more natural movement and escape the audience's notice.

5



Reveal the nickel and place it on the table. Now tell the audience you're going to magically restore the penny. Insert the coin tray back into the coin case so the rod inside the coin case reveals the penny.

6



Pull the coin tray out a final time and reveal that the penny has indeed returned!

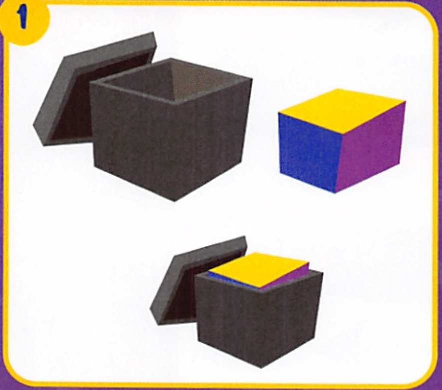
Color Vision

From the Kit:

- Color Vision Box and Cube

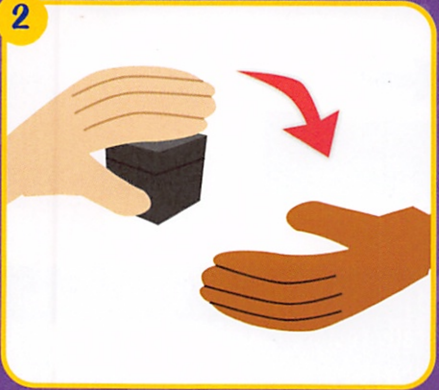
What to Do:

1

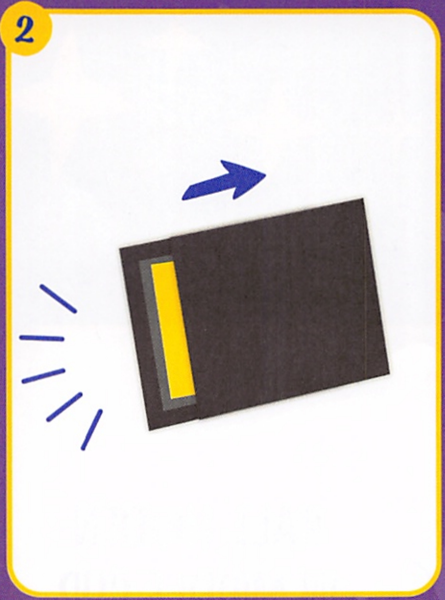


Open the box and place the cube on the table. Ask an audience member to pick up the cube and select any color they'd like and place it back in the box with the color they selected facing up. Turn your back to the audience as they choose.

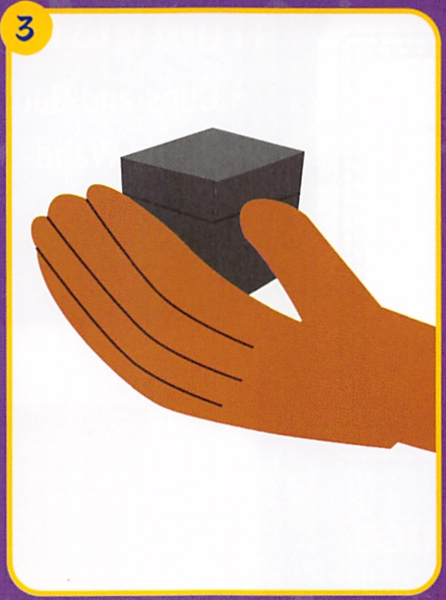
2



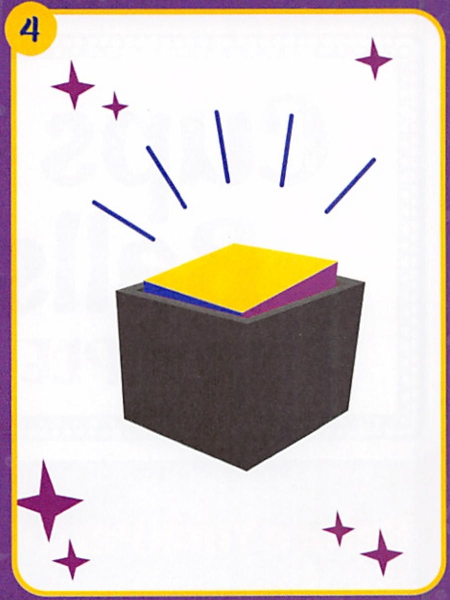
Ensure the audience member places the lid on the box, then have the audience member place the closed box in your hand, behind your back.



As you turn back around to face the audience, discreetly move the lid to the side of the box, so the opening of the box is facing you. You'll be able to see the color the audience member selected, and it will appear to the audience as if the box is still completely closed.



Hold the box up to your head and tell the audience you're attempting to peer inside the box with your mind.



Bring the box back down and declare the color you've seen. Then, pretend to open the box. As you pull the lid quickly rotate the box upward, so it appears as if you've taken the lid off the opening of the box. Your audience will be astounded!

Cups & Balls

SIMPLE

From the Kit:

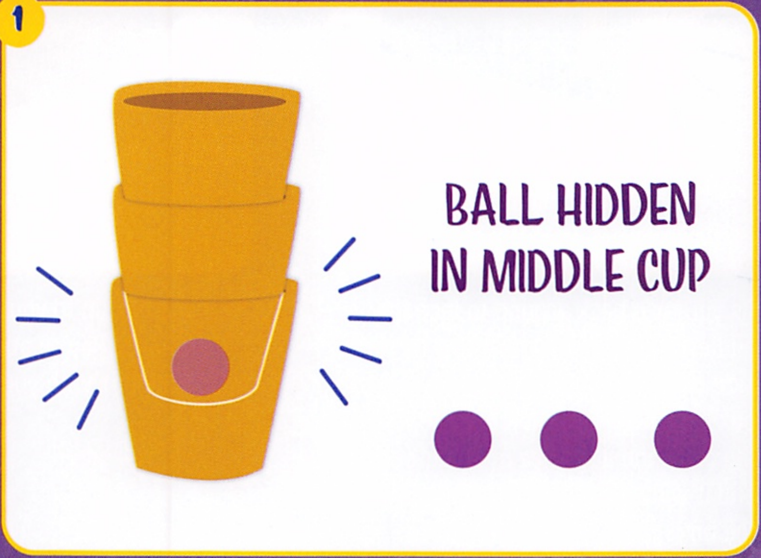
- Cups and Balls
- Magic Wand

Before Your Performance

Place one of the four balls inside one of the cups. Stack the cups, one inside the other, so the cup with the ball inside is in the middle of the stack. Now you're ready to perform.

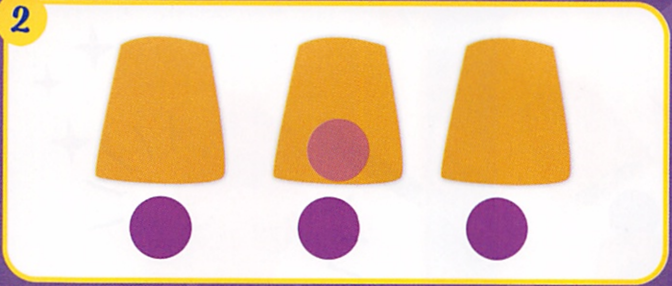
What to Do:

1


BALL HIDDEN IN MIDDLE CUP

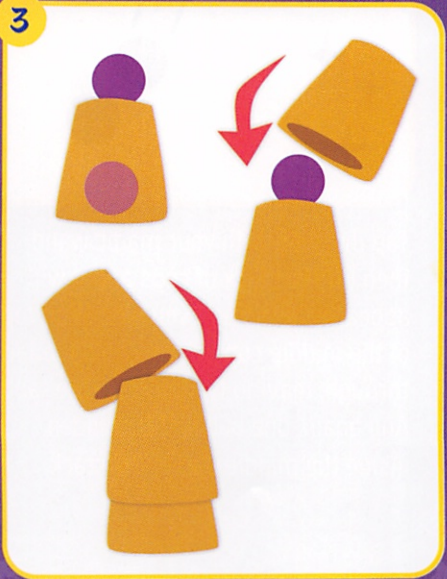
Place the remaining three balls side-by-side, evenly spaced, about 3–4 inches (7–10 cm) apart.

2



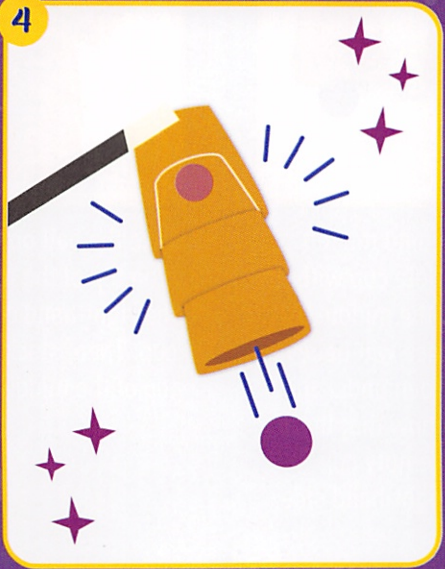
Place each of the cups behind the balls one at a time, open side down. As you place the middle cup behind the middle ball, be sure to rotate it quickly so the ball hidden inside the cup doesn't fall out and remains hidden from the audience.

3

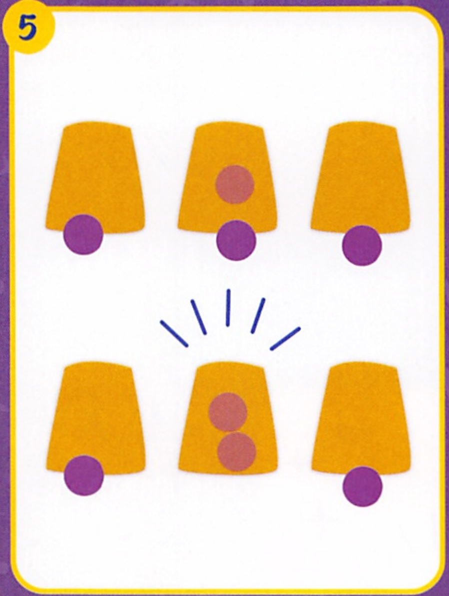


Take the middle ball from the table and place it on top of the middle cup. Then, stack the right-hand cup on top of the middle cup. Then, stack the left-hand cup on top of the other two cups.

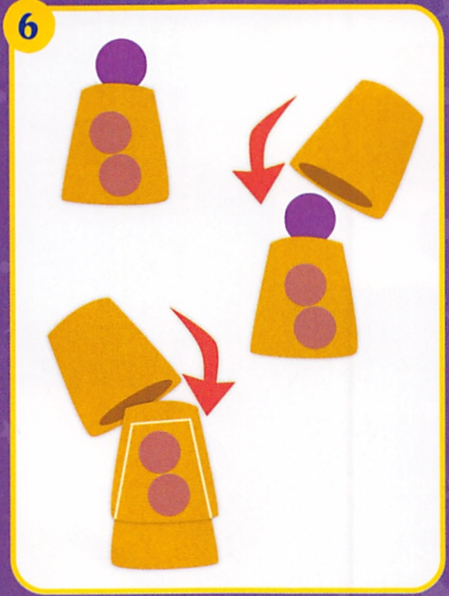
4



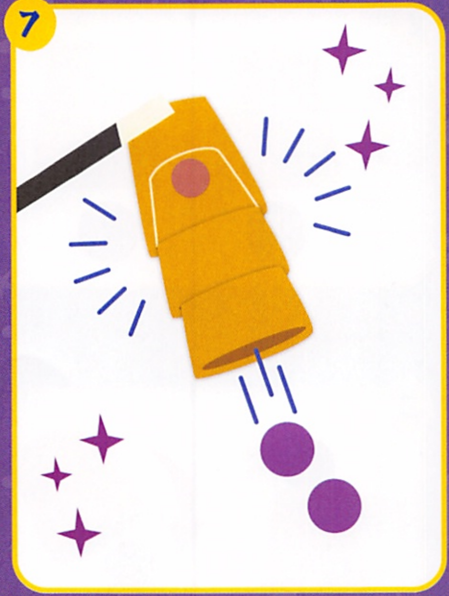
Tap the cups with your magic wand then lift the stack of cups and it will appear as if the ball you placed on top of the middle cup has magically fallen through back to the table! Meanwhile, the ball you placed on top of the cup in step 3 has now been hidden inside the middle cup in the stack.



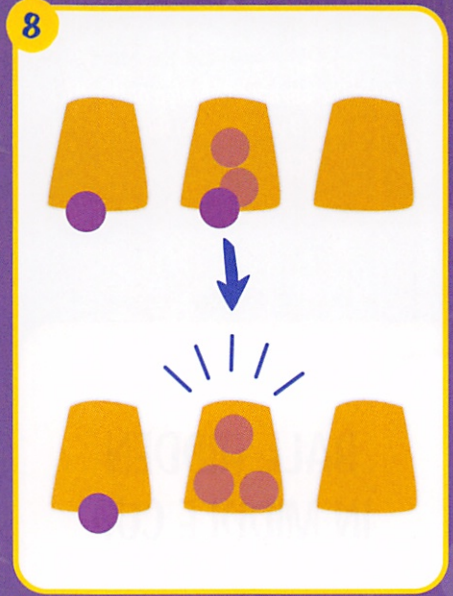
Place one empty cup behind the left-hand ball, place the middle cup with the ball hidden inside over the middle ball on the table. The audience will believe that only one ball is hidden under the middle cup, but you'll know that there are two! Place the final empty cup behind the ball on the right-hand side of the table.



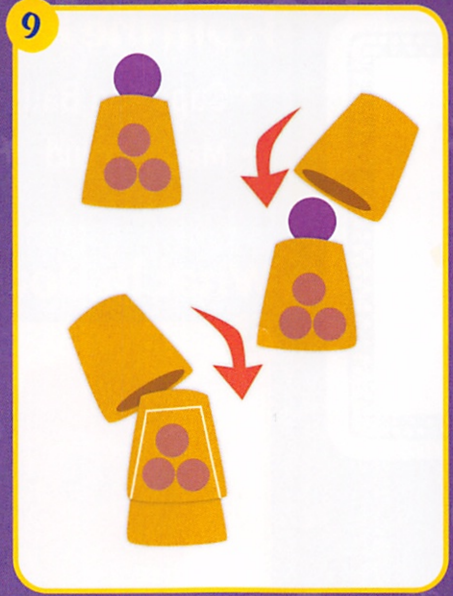
Take the ball on the right side and place it on top of the middle cup. Then, stack the right-hand cup on top of the middle cup. Then, stack the left-hand cup on top of the middle cups.



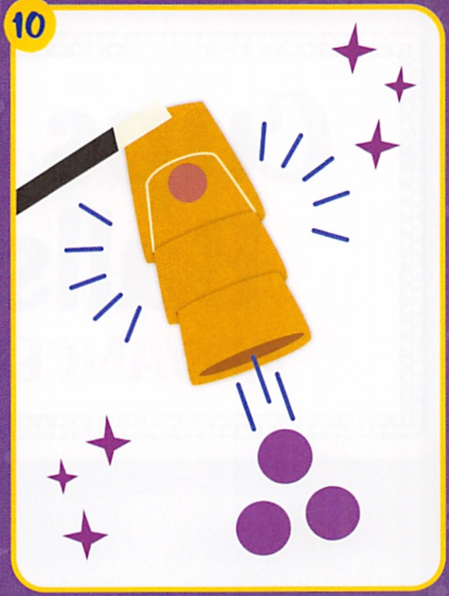
Tap the cups with your magic wand then lift the stack of cups and it will appear as if the ball you placed on top of the middle cup has magically fallen through, leaving two balls on the table! And again, one ball will be hidden inside the middle cup in the stack.



Place one empty cup behind the left-hand ball, place the middle cup with the ball hidden inside over the top of the two balls on the table. The audience will believe that only two balls are hidden under the middle cup, but you'll know that there are three! Place the final empty cup just to the right of the middle cup.



Take the final ball on the left-hand side and place it on top of the middle cup. Then stack the right-hand cup on top of the middle cup. Then, stack the left-hand cup on top of the middle cups.



Tap the cups with your magic wand, then lift the stack of cups and it will appear as if the final ball you placed on top of the middle cup has magically fallen through, leaving three balls on the table!

Cups & Balls

ADVANCED

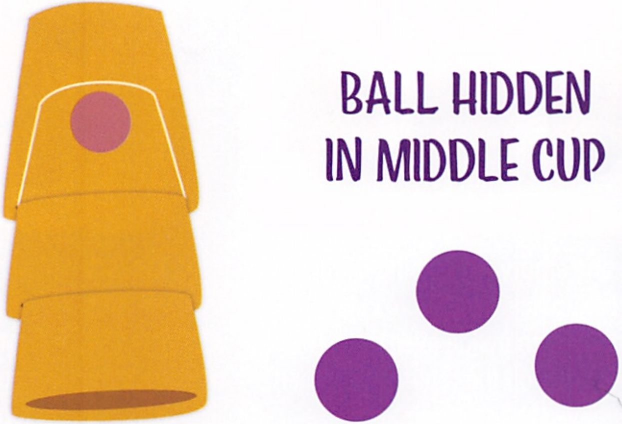
From the Kit:

- Cups and Balls
- Magic Wand

Note: *The advanced version of this trick works best if you perform it immediately after the simple version.*

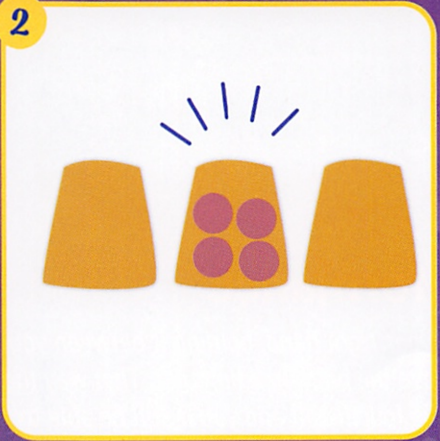
What to Do:

1


BALL HIDDEN IN MIDDLE CUP

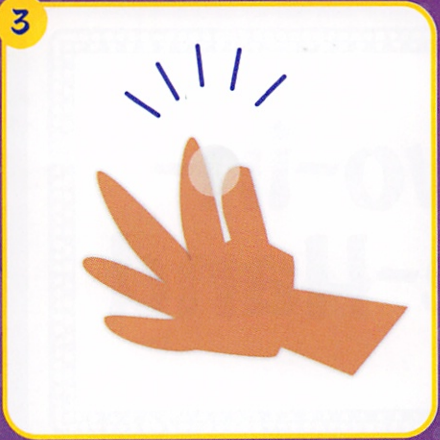
After you've performed the simple version of cups and balls, your audience will see three balls on the table with a stack of cups behind it. You'll know that there is a fourth ball hiding inside the middle cup, but they won't!

2



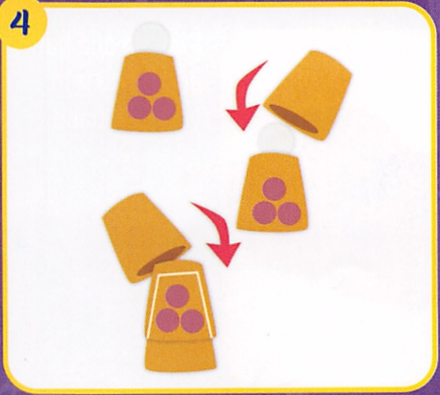
Place one empty cup to the left of the pile of three balls. Then take the middle cup with the ball hidden inside and place it over the top of the pile of three balls, moving fast so the audience doesn't spot the hidden ball inside. Place the final empty cup to the right of the middle cup.

3



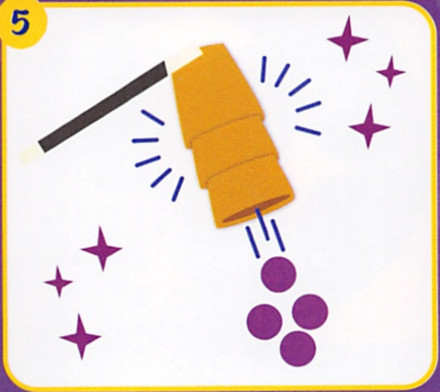
Mimic taking an invisible ball from behind your ear. Hold it up to the audience. They won't be able to see it because it's invisible but assure them that it's there.

4



Place the invisible ball on top of the middle cup, then stack the left and right-side cups on top of the middle cup.

5



Tap the stack of cups with the magic wand, then lift the stack to reveal that there are now four balls underneath the middle cup!

Two-in-the-Hand

From the Kit:

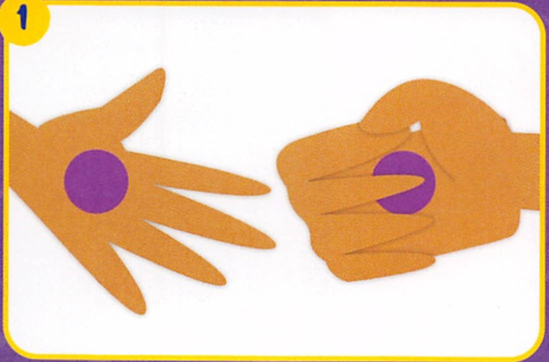
- 4 Balls from the Cups and Balls trick

Before Your Performance

Place one of the four balls into your right hand, holding it between your middle and ring fingers just above the palm in a light fist. That way the audience won't be able to see the fourth ball and you'll still be able to use your right hand to move the three balls on the table.

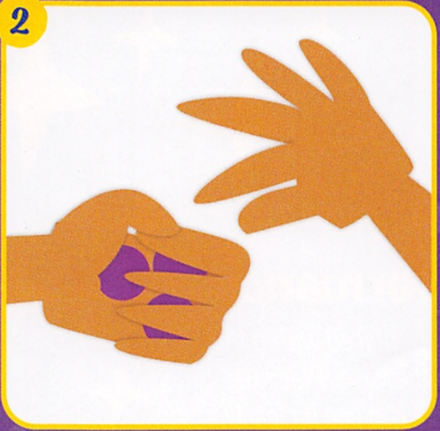
What to Do:

1



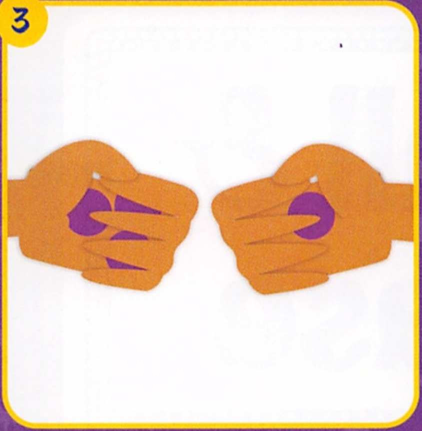
Pick up one ball and place it in your left hand.

2



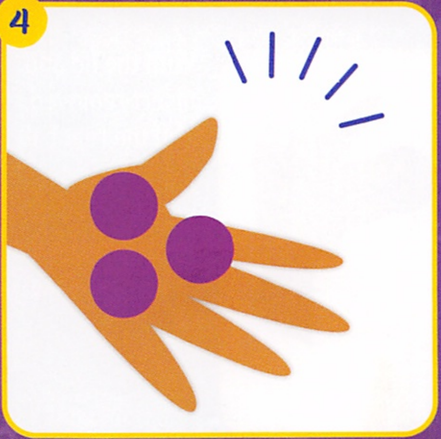
Pick up the second ball and place it, along with the ball you've hidden in your right hand, into your left hand. Make a loose fist to hold the balls in your left hand as soon as you place the second and hidden balls into your left hand.

3



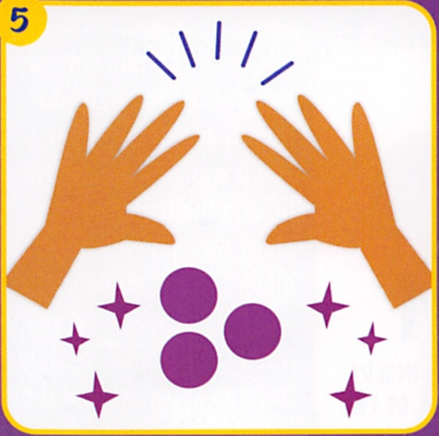
Pick up the third ball from the table with your right hand and pretend to put it in your pocket. You'll really want to keep it hidden in your fingers as you did with the first hidden ball.

4



Now, open your left hand and reveal to the audience that there are three balls in your hand where they thought there would only be two!

5



Repeat Steps 1 through 4 a second time, then repeat a third time except this time leave the hidden ball in your right-hand pocket for real. That way when you place the three balls from your left hand on the table, you can show the audience both of your empty hands. They'll be stunned!

Ball & Vase

From the Kit:

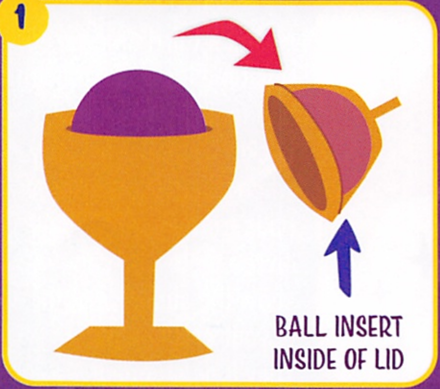
- Ball and Vase
- Magic Wand

Before Your Performance

Ensure the ball and ball insert are placed within the vase, that the lid is securely on the vase. Place the vase on the table so the audience can see it clearly.

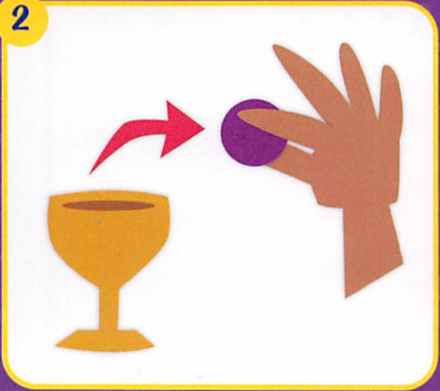
What to Do:

1

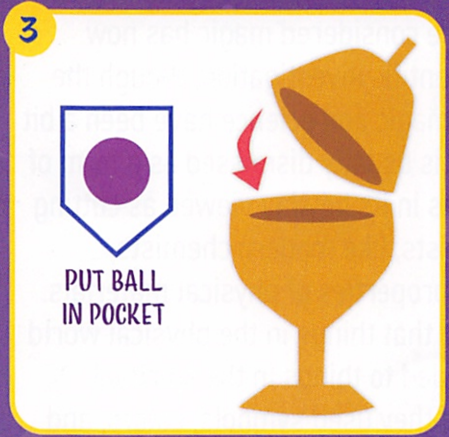


Lift the lid by pinching both sides of the lid with your thumb and index finger. You'll want to lift both the lid and the ball insert to show the audience the ball inside. To the audience, it will only appear as if you've lifted the lid because they have no knowledge of the insert you've concealed.

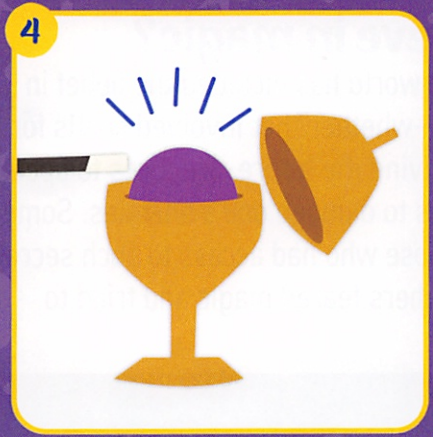
2



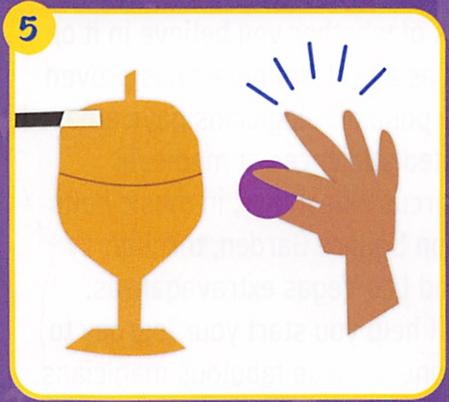
With the lid and insert removed, pull the real ball from the vase with your other hand and show it to the audience.



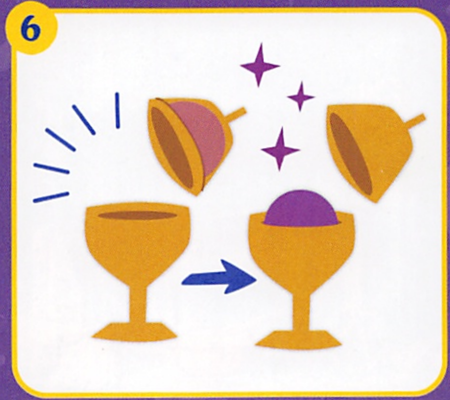
Place the ball into your pants pocket, then pick up the vase lid and insert and place them on top of the vase base. The audience will believe that the vase is empty because they saw you place the ball in your pocket.



Pick up your magic wand, tap your pocket, then tap the vase. This time, remove only the top cover of the base, leaving the insert in place. The audience will see what appears to be the ball back in the vase!



Place the lid back on top of the vase base and insert. Tap the vase with the magic wand, then tap your pocket. Pull the ball out of your pocket and show the audience.



Open the vase as you did in Step 2, concealing the insert and making it appear as if the vase is once again empty. You can then replace the ball, insert, and lid and your audience will be stunned!

Do you believe in magic?

Every culture in the world has included the belief in some kind of magic—whether that involved spells for healing, rituals to divine the future, practices to speak to the dead, or hexes to damage one's enemies. Some cultures honored those who had access to such secret knowledge, while others feared magic and tried to stamp it out.

Much of what was once considered magic has now been explained by scientific investigation, though the distinctions between magic and science have been a bit hazy. Alchemy, which is usually dismissed as a form of magical nonsense, was in its heyday viewed as cutting edge science. Alchemists, like modern chemists, studied the essential properties of physical materials. But they also believed that things in the physical world corresponded to things in the spiritual world, and they used symbols, colors, and codes to extract the secrets of the universe, making their study more like what we think of as magic today.

Regardless of whether you believe in it or not, magic as a performing art has proven enduringly popular. Magicians have amazed and delighted audiences at medieval fairs and circus sideshows, in music halls and Madison Square Garden, through TV specials and Las Vegas extravaganzas. This kit will help you start your journey to becoming one of those fabulous magicians.

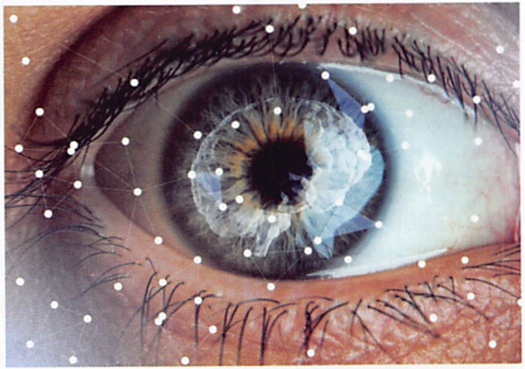
THE SCIENCE OF ILLUSION

Every magician's success depends on "sleight of hand"—that is, the ability to deceive the audience by using one's hands to hide objects or misdirect the viewer's gaze. The term is related to the idea of being sly or deceitful. But actually, the magician is just taking advantage of how the human brain works.

Scientists who study the brain are collaborating with magicians like Teller, from the famous duo Penn & Teller, to explore the abilities and limitations of human perception. The world is just too big and complex for the brain to process every single bit of information that your eyes perceive. Instead, the brain constructs "reality" by making guesses about what things look like—and sometimes those guesses are wrong!

Think about how a dog reacts when, after you throw a stick a few times for them to chase, you fool the dog by pretending to throw the stick. The dog predicts, based on past events, where the stick will be thrown and merrily chases after it, while the stick remains in your hand.

It turns out that your brain takes the same kinds of shortcuts when it tries to interpret the signals coming from your eyes. When we look at something moving in a straight line, our eyes automatically seek out where the brain predicts that the endpoint of that line will be. But if a hand is moving in an arc, our eyes don't know where the endpoint is, so they focus on the hand.



In some cases, our brain works like a spotlight: we pay attention to the thing that's lit up and fail to see the things outside the spotlight. We focus on the magician's hand holding the wand, but we miss the other hand, which might be reaching into a pocket to retrieve or hide an object.

The more scientists study the brain, the more they learn about how we perceive the world around us. But magicians may already be one step ahead of the scientists, using our ways of perceiving the world to baffle our brains and dazzle us with "magic."

TYPES OF MAGIC

To understand the various sorts of magic performed on stage, it helps to look at them by the kind of effect they produce.

Production magic involves creating something from nothing, like when a magician produces a rabbit out of an empty hat or a flower bouquet from thin air. The opposite of production is ***vanishing***—making something disappear. In 1983, magician David Copperfield made the Statue of Liberty vanish on live television!

If a magician turns a person into a tiger or changes an egg into a bird, that's ***transformation magic***. Similarly, a magician can practice ***transposition magic***—making two things swap places. The queen of hearts that an audience member is holding suddenly becomes a two of spades, while the card in the magician's hand becomes the queen! In ***restoration magic***, an item that has been destroyed—like a ripped up dollar bill or a rope that's cut into pieces—magically becomes whole once more.

Sometimes magic seems to defy the laws of physics. ***Levitation magic*** lets objects defy gravity and hover in the air by themselves while ***penetration magic*** can make us doubt whether a solid object is really solid. Unbreakable steel rings link and unlink, a ball moves through a wall and into a box, or a sword passes right through a person's body!

Harry Houdini

Some magicians display remarkable powers of ***mentalism.*** They may predict which card a volunteer will choose or how much spare change is in a person's pocket. Or they may use the power of suggestion to make an audience member bark like a dog or believe that they are Elvis Presley.

Escape magic, the specialty of Harry Houdini, persists as a popular form of stage magic. Today, escape artist Michael Griffin has offered $100,000 to anyone who can keep him prisoner—and so far no one has been able to collect!

SAY THE MAGIC WORD!

Stage magicians frequently bring their tricks to a startling finish by exclaiming a "magic word." Many of these words have their origins in imitations of Latin or possibly garbled versions of religious ceremonies.

The 2nd century Roman author, Serenus Sammonicus, described how *Abracadabra* could be used as a charm to protect against evil. A person was supposed to write the word on papyrus multiple times, dropping the final letter on each line. As the word got smaller and smaller, the person's bad luck would get smaller too.

ABRACADABRA
ABRACADABR
ABRACADAB
ABRACADA
ABRACAD
ABRACA
ABRAC
ABRA
ABR
AB
A

Hocus pocus was used by jugglers as far back as the 17th century and may be a form of fake Latin, while *alakazam* appeared in the early 20th century as an exotic, foreign-sounding word with possible Arabic roots. Regardless of their origins, such words can give a mystical flavor to any magic trick. What magic words will you use?

TIPS FOR BEGINNERS:

1. Learn to do a few tricks really well rather than a lot of them unconvincingly. You'll be more confident and your audience will feel that they have seen something special.
2. Practice, practice, practice! Once you feel comfortable doing a trick slowly, gradually increase the speed until you can do it without looking at your hands.
3. Magic is acting—focus on your performance, not the trick itself. Use a mirror to see how the trick will look to your audience.
4. Perform for audiences as often as possible. Remember to look at your audience so that they follow the direction of your eyes, rather than focusing on what your hands are doing.
5. Fake confidence, even if you're nervous. Magic is about belief, so you have to look like you believe in yourself.
6. Let your own personality into your show. If you like cracking jokes, include a few funny lines in your act. If you're more serious, try making your gestures and facial expressions reflect that intensity.
7. Never, ever reveal the secret of a trick, no matter how much your friends or family ask how you did it. Magic explained is no longer magical.

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